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“ABRAHAM LINCOLN—THE MAN.”

RESPONSE

OF

HOX. WILLIAM SULLIVAN,
OF NEW YORK,

To the Vice President of the
Lincoln Association of Jersey City,
New Jersey.

TUESDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 12, 1907.

[This speech was originally delivered to the people of Jersey City, New Jersey, on the 12th of February, 1907, in the Hall of Congress, Jersey City, N. J. [See page 27, 1907.]



W. S.

WASHINGTON,

1907.

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RESPONSE OR HON. WILLIAM SULZER.

To the toast "Abraham Lincoln—the Man," at the banquet of the Lincoln Association of Jersey City, N. J. —

Mr. SULZER said:

Mr. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN: This is Lincoln's birthday, and we are met to honor his memory.

It is a matter of much personal gratification for me to be with you to-night. The hospitality of the Lincoln Association, of Jersey City, in the grand old Commonwealth of New Jersey, is famous from one end of the country to the other; and justly so, because your association rises above creed and condition and race and prejudice and stands for the toast assigned to me—"Abraham Lincoln—the Man," and the eternal principles of liberty, justice, and humanity, that must ever be dear to every heart that believes in the greatness and the grandeur of our first martyred President.

I am glad to see so many here to-night—so many distinguished gentlemen, so many eloquent speakers, and I am glad to pay my tribute to your association—the only Lincoln Association in all the land that has never failed, year in and year out, for nearly half a century, to fittingly celebrate the anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln—and to say that you are to be commended and congratulated for all you have done in the past, for all you are doing now, and for all you will continue to do in the future to make the name of "Lincoln—the Man" shine resplendent with the immortals of all time in all the centuries yet to come.

His name, reaching down through the age of time,
Will still through the age of eternity shine—
Like a star, sailing on through the depths of the sky,
On whose brightness we gaze every evening now.

Let me say, Mr. President, that Lincoln has ever been my ideal of a man—a great man. I have been a believer in and an admirer of Abraham Lincoln ever since early boyhood days. I have studied his speeches, read and reread his writings, worshipped at his shrine, gloried in his career, and have always been a close student of his wise and just and patriotic teachings. He was, in my opinion, *take him all in all*, the most heroic figure in all our history, and next to the Declaration of Independence, he wrote the greatest political document in our annals—the Emancipation Proclamation.

In the words of John Stuart Mill, "Abraham Lincoln was the kind of a man Carlyle in his better days taught us to worship as a hero." And as the years come and go, he will be wor-

He is loved and in every clime, from the
North to the South, throughout the world, by the friends

of his life, of his joys and sorrows, his hopes and fears, from the little log cabin in Kentucky, where he first came to the Presidency, which reads like a record of the history of any other country than ours. The story of his life can also step by step on the floor of the House. This story of the life and the labors of Lincoln, of his trials, his tribulations, and his triumphs, will be a source of hope for the present day in all our trials and difficulties of all Americans.

Abraham Lincoln believed in exact justice to all men. He was the incarnation of democracy. He was no respecter of persons, of conditions, or of power. He cared nothing for position and less for wealth. He believed in and enunciated the great cardinal principle of Jefferson—"Equal rights to all; special privileges to none."

He was a great comrade; he gloried in the Declaration of Independence; he believed in its principles, and he honored and revered its immortal author. In speaking of Jefferson in 1861, Mr. Lincoln said:

All honor to Jefferson; to a man who, in the concrete pressure of a struggle for national independence by a single people, had the coolness, fore-sight, and capacity to introduce into a merely revolutionary document an abstract truth, applicable to all men, and all times; and so to embalm it there east today and in all coming days it shall be a rebuke and a stumbling block to the harbinger of re-emerging tyranny and oppression!

In my opinion no higher tribute was ever paid to the author of the Declaration of Independence. All honor to the memory of Jefferson! All honor to the memory of Lincoln! The two great American immortals.

When I was in the legislature of the State of New York, I asked the late Senator Donald McNaughan, the representative from Rochester, who knew Lincoln well, and who frequently met him in the trying days of the civil war, "Who, in your opinion, was the greatest politician and statesman that America has ever produced?" and the wise old Scotch senator, without a moment's hesitation, replied, "Lincoln." And then after a few moments of quiet thought he said:

My young friend, if you want to be one a real man and a Christian in the American Republic, study and emulate the life of Abraham Lincoln.

From his earliest youth to the sad loss of his beloved dying day Abraham Lincoln was always true to the promptings of his heart, true to his principles, and they were the principles of humanity, the principles of liberty, and the principles of a free government. He was always true to his professed faith, true to the fundamental teachings of the fathers of the Republic, true to the men who were striving to do right. In one of his speeches he said:

I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true. I am not bound to succeed, but I am bound to fly even though right I may. I must stand with everybody that stands right; stand with him while he is right, and part with him when he goes wrong.

What a noble sentiment!

Lincoln was a great lawyer. In his own way probably one of the greatest lawyers that ever lived in America. He was a great orator, and his simple speech at Gettysburg is one of the great classics of America; and his innumerable speeches, especially his wonderful debates with Douglas, conclusively prove that he was one of our greatest orators.

He was a man of quaint humor, of much sorrow, of infinite jest, of much common sense, and he searched and knew the human heart. He had faith that right makes might, and in the light of that faith he dared to the end to do his duty as he saw it.

He was a simple man—simple in his strength and in his greatness. In moments of repose he was sad and reflective. His

sympathy was with the poor and the lowly--with the sorrowing. His great heart went out to those who struggle and fail. He was always the same, yet ever different--like the waters of the sea, but he remembered, as he said in his first speech, that he was "humble Abraham Lincoln."

He was a great statesman, and no one to-day, reading his letters and his state papers, can doubt for a moment that he was the ablest and the most farseeing politician of his time, and the greatest and grandest statesman this country has ever produced.

Lincoln stands alone in the illumined pages of American history--the greatest and the grandest and the most colossal figure in all our annals.

No one will ever know the blood drops and the suffering of Abraham Lincoln during the darkest and most trying days of the civil war, the greatest war of modern times, when a million men from the North and a million men from the South, with their guns and drums, and their tramping to and fro, met in the shock of battle, shook the earth, and the very pillars of our free institutions. Thank God, father Abraham won, and we are brothers again.

In this connection I want to tell a story, that perhaps has never been printed before, regarding Mr. Lincoln's sadness and greatness, and dry wit and imitable humor, and in this composition there was much of all these elements. In the early days of the war for the Union a great body of leading bankers and financiers of New York called at the White House to see Mr. Lincoln, and asked him to send ships and troops to New York to protect their treasures. Mr. Lincoln listened patiently to all this committee had to say, and when they finished he said, in his quiet, sad, and simple way:

Gentlemen, in answer to all you have said, I reply that I am doing everything in my power with the forces at my command to save the Union. There is no danger to your treasures in New York City, and instead of asking me to send war ships and troops to New York to protect them, you should go back home and lend your money to the Government and help save the Union.

The great committee of bankers and financiers returned to New York wiser and more patriotic men from these few words of the iron clad martyred President.

Lincoln loved the Union, and his first inaugural message proves that his only desire was to save the Union from civil strife and dissolution. He had said many times before that a house divided against itself can not stand, and Lincoln was right.

When Doctor Long, an intimate friend of Lincoln, said to him one day, "Well, Lincoln, that foolish speech will kill you--will defeat you for all offices for all time to come," referring to the "house divided" speech, Mr. Lincoln replied:

If I had to draw a pen across and erase my whole life from existence, and I had one poor girl or choice gift, as to what I should save from the wreck, I should choose that speech, and leave it to the world unerased.

He was the friend of the toiler--of the producer--of the great army of men who earn their bread by the sweat of their face. In his message to Congress in December, 1861, he said:

Labor is prior to and independent of capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital, and deserves much the higher consideration. No man is living who is more worthy to be trusted than those who toil for their bread,--one less inclined to take of a such amount which they did not fairly earn.

Lincoln died in the prime of his life, at the summit of his career, in the zenith of his fame, in the service of his country, loved by every friend of man, and mourned by all the world.

There is a reaper whose name is Death,

And with his sickle keen

He reaps the Leandros which at a breath,

And the flowers that grow between.

But the reaper can never rob humanity of the undying fame of Abraham Lincoln. As my friend Col. Henry Worcester said most truly and eloquently said:

A thousand years hence no story, no legend, no old poem will be fitted with greater wonder or be read with greater interest than that which tells of his life and death.

Lincoln was indeed a man—the man whom we say we shall not look again; and the Lincoln in all history is the model of man—the greatest apostle of human welfare since 1776 ever seen.

The mortal Lincoln is no more, but the immortal Lincoln stands at Springfield, and like the statue of the good Moses of the Hebrews, who is seated on the mountain of Mount Nebo, looking down on the valley of the Jordan, and the Jordan and Kishon are at the foot of the mountain, and the Jordan of liberty.

But Lincoln needs no mortal statue, for he is in the fields of memory; he will live forever in this world, and all the world will live in the hearts of the people. The world of the generations will arise to call him the greatest man in the history of their consecrated Republic.

The noble Lincoln was probably the greatest man that ever lived during the time he was in the world. He was a nobler man than any that ever lived in our country, and he was a nobler man than any that ever lived in the world. He was a man who all his life bowed down with the weight of the world, and all the world paid a large toll to his weighty mantle. He was a man whose deeds and works and words will live forever.

No paper in all the world can tell the story of the life of Lincoln, and yet, when the death of Lincoln was reported in the most beautiful tributes there ever was a strain of the strain of man, and James Kissell Loyall, editor of *American Standard*, summed it all up in a strain in his *Obituary*, and we can then he said of the undying fame of Lincoln:

Great captains, with their names, I do not care to call them for the honor;

But at last silence comes, the gallant dead,
And standing like a tower in childhood, holds in high regard the glory
of his fame.

This kindly, earnest, brave, free-swinging man—
Sagacious, patient, discerning, polished, and wise—

New bird of our new soil—the first American.



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